

Civility

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote appropriate behavior, civility, and orderly conduct in the Oak Harbor School District. The Board of Directors believes that a safe and civil environment is essential for providing a quality education to students. Uncivil behavior is detrimental to the quality of that experience and is consequently addressed in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This policy details the District's expectations regarding conduct on District property, with the community and District staff (in the performance of their assigned duties), and at activities and events for which the District is responsible.

Policy Statement

The Board believes that the overwhelming majority of individuals will conduct themselves in a civil manner in their contact and communication with and within the District, and during District-sponsored activities. The District encourages open communication, but will not tolerate aggressive, antagonistic, rude, hostile, or abusive conduct and/or communication by any person in any form. The superintendent will develop and maintain an ongoing program of staff training, written and oral communications, and other resources as necessary to achieve the intent of this policy. Administrators must require civil conduct in the buildings and programs for which they are responsible. Administrators will also provide support for individuals who are the victims of uncivil conduct.

The civility policy does not deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression or access to any District property, as long as such conduct is mutually respectful. Citizens may criticize, challenge and question its public educators; however, everyone has the responsibility to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Parents and other members of the community are responsible to communicate with District employees in a respectful manner. Likewise, District employees have a professional responsibility to attempt to deescalate confrontations, utilizing required training, and to treat all members of the public and other staff members with courtesy and civility.

Issues related to this policy are addressed in other Board policies

- A. Complaints against employees may be more appropriately handled through Board Policy 4220, "Complaints Concerning Staff or Programs."
- B. Complaints regarding student bullying are more appropriately handled by Board Policy 3207, "Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying."
- C. Complaints regarding sexual harassment are more appropriately handled by Board Policy 5255, "Sexual Harassment."
- D. Expectations for staff interactions with the public are outlined in Board Policy 4010, "Staff Communication Responsibilities."

Definitions

By defining uncivil conduct the District's purposes are to:

- A. Promote a safe and productive learning environment for students and staff;
- B. Provide guidelines for all persons regarding uncivil conduct;
- C. Support victims of uncivil conduct in a timely and appropriate manner; and
- D. Promote effective and civil interactions with and between staff, students, parents, and all members of the community.

The uncivil conduct defined below is irrespective of method, whether in person, via phone, text, instant message, email, written correspondence, social media or any other medium.

Threats are defined in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 9A.04.110, including the definition of malice: “‘Malice’ and ‘maliciously’ shall import (mean) an evil intent, wish, or design to vex, annoy, or injure another person. Malice may be inferred from an act done in willful disregard of the rights of another, or an act wrongfully done without just cause or excuse.”

In Notes to RCW 28A.600.455, Findings – Intent – 1997 c. 266, the Washington State Legislature, “finds that the children of this state have the right to an effective public education and that both students and educators have the need to be safe and secure in the classroom if learning is to occur.”

Uncivil Conduct

The perception of uncivil conduct is partially subjective, and this policy recognizes that the standard by which its violation is determined is individual. Generally, uncivil conduct is defined as behavior that would cause a reasonable individual to feel a sense of threat, cause undue stress, cause disturbances of good order, and/or constitute a violation of the statutes cited within this policy. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A. Using language or tone of voice to be derisive, sarcastic, disdainful, or degrading.
- B. Using rude, vulgar, or obscene language and/or gestures.
- C. Using language, behavior, or tone of voice and/or speaking volume that is hostile, threatening, intimidating, or malicious.
- D. Using personal epithets, slurs, or other references as terms of abuse, contempt, or hostility.
- E. Invasions of staff members’ personal spaces or blocking their movements.
- F. Speaking over or repeatedly interrupting another so they are unable to communicate.
- G. Using insulting and disrespectful nonverbal behaviors toward or in connection with another.
- H. Gossip, slander or other communication that negatively impacts the workplace.

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| Cross References: | Board Policy 3205 | Safety and Civility in Schools |
| | 3207 | Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying |
| | 4010 | Staff Communication |
| | 4200 | Safe and Orderly School Environment |
| | 4220 | Complaints Concerning Staff or Programs |
| | 5255 | Sexual Harassment |
| | 5270 | Resolution of Staff Complaints |
| Legal References: | RCW 28A.635.010 | Misdemeanor: Insulting or abusing a teacher |
| | RCW 28A.635.020 | Gross misdemeanor: Willfully disobeying school administrative personnel or refusing to leave public property |
| | RCW 28A.635.030 | Misdemeanor: Disturbing school activities or meetings |
| | RCW 28A.635.090 | Felony: Interference by force or violence |
| | RCW 28A.635.100 | Gross misdemeanor: Threatening violence or force |

RCW 9A.76.180

Felony: Intimidating a public servant's opinion,
decision, or other official actions as a public
servant

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